

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Vulcan Painters Inc

#### Alabama Technology Network

#### Vulcan Painters Increases Sales With Help From ATN

##### Client Profile:

The Vulcan Group is a privately held company that was established in 1984 and employs approximately 120 people. The company owns several companies that provide painting and coating services, including Vulcan Pipe Shops, Vulcan Painters, Vulcan Electro-Coating, and Vulcan Concrete. This project describes order processing at the Vulcan Painters' facility in Bessemer, Alabama, which employs 13 people. Vulcan Painters has another facility in Pinson, Alabama. Vulcan Painters focuses on the industrial finishing market, including coating structural steel, piping, and sewer lines.

##### Situation:

Vulcan's previous order tracking and inventory management processes were largely manual, without standardization, and were maintained in simple word processing templates. Orders were particularly difficult to locate and track, and little historical data was kept available for analysis. As such, much of the motivation for the new Order Tracking System (OTS) included the desire to standardize the processes, reduce multiple entries and errors associated with duplication of manual processes, and capture better data for use in reports and analysis. Additionally, the system was developed with the objective of providing greater detail in order tracking of jobs through the production processes. Vulcan contracted the development of the new OTS as a customized system that would provide user friendly access and data entry into an order tracking database in simple, standard formats. Vulcan Painters contacted the Alabama Technology Network (ATN), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

##### Solution:

The scope of the collaboration between ATN and Vulcan Painters included an examination of the processes and systems in place for order tracking and inventory management of the products throughout the various processes of pipe painting. The team started by reviewing the current order tracking and inventory management processes. The development of the software system was in a phased manner, but the newly deployed system was used along with the old manual system for sometime. Once the end users got comfortable with OTS, the old system was completely replaced. By taking the end users into confidence and by developing the software through prototyping, management ensured a smooth transition from the old to the new system.

##### Results:

- \* Developed new Order Tracking System to provide a stable, secure and more permanent data storage.
- \* Reduced time and effort required in statistical quality control.
- \* Reduced paperwork.
- \* Increased productivity.

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

- \* Increased sales over \$1.5 million.
- \* Projected sales increase of 39 percent for 2005/2006.

**Testimonial:**

"The Order Tracking System developed for Vulcan by ATN's Alabama Productivity Center revolutionized our order fulfillment, inventory management, and production scheduling activities. This project is a prime example of the valuable services that the Alabama Productivity Center provides to small and medium-sized manufacturers."

Nathan Reamey, Operations Manager